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AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 MOSCOW 2570

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CSCE, UR

SUBJECT: SOVIET APPROACH TO CSCE IMPLEMENTATION: THE HISTORICAL
DIMENSION

REFS: STATE 29999, MOSCOW 2445

1. SUMMARY. SOME COMMENTS ON HOW THE SOVIET APPROACH TO CSCE IMPLEMENTATION HAVE EVOLVED OVER TIME MAY SERVE TO GIVE DEPTH TO RECENT SNAPSHOTS (REFTEL). IN OUR VIEW, SOVIETS WENT INTO AND CAME OUT CSCE WITH CLEAR, DRY EYES: THEY WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO PAY LESS (AND LESS FREQUENTLY) FOR WHAT THEY WANTED, BUT WERE WILLING TO BARGAIN AND SAW NO SIDE-EFFECTS THEY COULD NOT CONTROL. THE RESULT WAS THEREFORE SATISFACTORY; WHAT WAS MISSING FROM SOVIET POST-CSCE EXPECTATIONS WAS ANY BUILT-IN MOTOR FOR SPECIFIC IMPLEMENTATION STEPS BEFORE THEIR PARTY CONGRESS IN FEBRUARY. WESTERN PRESSURE CHANGED THAT AND THEY WERE LONG IN DEVELOPING A STRATEGY TO MEET IT. THE DEFENSIVE COMPONENT--THE ROLLING MEDIA ATTACK ON ALLEGEDLY UNSATISFACTORY WESTERN PERFORMANCE--WAS IN PLACE BEFORE THE OFFENSIVE COMPONENT--THE PROGRAM OF CONCRETE MOVES UNVEILED IN DECEMBER. WE SEE THREE STRANDS IN THIS PROGRAM: THE CONFERENCES ON ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORTATION AND ENERGY PROPOSED BY BREZHNEV IN WARSAW DECEMBER 9; SMALL STEPS ON JOURNALISTS AND THE LIKE DIRECTLY TIED TO CSCE PROVISIONS, UNILATERAL OR NEGOTIATED; AND SMALL FORMAL OR INFORMAL STEPS, LIKE PERMITTING PROMINENT JEWISH REFUSEES TO LEAVE, WHICH CAN BE ADVERTISED AS IMPLEMENTATION ALTHOUGH THEY ARE DRIVEN MAINLY BY OTHER IMPERATIVES LIKE THE CPSU CONGRESS. BOTH THE DEFENSIVE AND OFFENSIVE FACES OF THIS STRATEGY, HOWEVER, NOW APPEAR TO BE IMBEDDED IN SOVIET POLICY. IN RETROSPECT, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE SOVIET PROBLEM HAS BEEN ONE OF TIMING, PREFERENCE AND INERTIA, RATHER THAN PRINCIPLE, SINCE THEIR OBLIGATIONS FALL WELL WITHIN THE CONFIDENTIAL

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MARGIN OF SAFETY THE SYSTEM CAN AFFORD. REGAINING AND MAINTAINING SOVIET SPONSORSHIP OF THE CSCE PROCESS WILL REMAIN A SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVE UNTIL BELGRADE AND BEYOND, AND THE SOVIETS CAN BE EXPECTED TO KEEP MOVING TO ACHIEVE THEM. END SUMMARY.

2. AS NATO APPROACHES ITS SECOND STOCKTAKING EXERCISE ON CSCE IMPLEMENTATION, IT MAY BE WORTHWHILE TO SPPE-

MENT THE TWO USEFUL RECENT SNAPSHOTS OF THE SOVIET APPROACH AFTER SIX MONTHS (REFTELS) WITH SOME COMMENTS ON HOW IT HAS DEVELOPED OVER TIME.

3. IN OUR VIEW, THE SOVIETS WENT INTO (AND CAME OUT OF) CSCE WITH THEIR EYES WIDE OPEN. THEY WANTED A CONFERENCE WHICH COULD BE MADE TO SYMBOLIZE GENERAL RATIFICATION OF THE RESULTS OF WORLD WAR II IN EUROPE, AND IF POSSIBLE TO SUBSTITUTE FOR A PEACE TREATY; TO ADVANCE THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE WEST; AND TO PROMOTE AN ALL-EUROPEAN SECURITY SYSTEM PERMEATED WITH THEIR INFLUENCE. THEY WERE WILLING TO PAY SOMETHING, INSIDE THE CONFERENCE AND OUT, TO MAKE PROGRESS TOWARD THESE HOARDY GOALS, BUT THEY UNDERSTANDABLY WANTED TO PAY AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE. IN FACT, THEY ENDED BY PAYING SOMETHING: THE BERLIN ACCORDS, THE BEGINNING OF MBFR, THE DEMONSTRATION THAT THE ASPIRATIONS OF EUROPEAN NEUTRALS WERE MORE "WESTERN" THAN "EASTERN", AND LEGITIMATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AS A POPER TOPIC OF INTERNATIONAL DISCOURSE. THE CONFERENCE ALSO REINFORCED THEIR OWN PENCHANT FOR CAUTION AND RES- TRAIT IN POST-1968 EUROPE, AND THEREFORE THIER ALLIES' PENCHANT FOR MULTIPLYING TIES ACROSS THE EAST-WEST DIVIDE. SINCE THE SOVIETS WERE CONFIDENT OF THEIR OWN STRENGHT, ANXIOUS TO CLEAR AWAY MOST OF THE LEGACY OF THE COLD WAR IN EUROPE, AND WILLING TO HOPE THAT THE CONFERENCE WOULD USHER IN AN EAR OF GOOD FEELING FAVORABLE TO THEIR INTERESTS, THESE WERE ACCEPTABLE PRICE TAGS. THEY WERE NO DOUBT NONPLUSSED AT THE LENGTH AND COMPLEXITY OF THE NEGOTIATIONS AND THE STRENGTH AND PERSISTENCE OF WESTERN (AND NEUTRAL) DEMANDS, AND WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO PAY LESS (AND LESS FREQUENTLY) INSIDE AND OUTSIDE CSCE FOR A "SUCCESSFUL" CONFERENCE. SOME OF THE SIDE-EFFECTS IN EASTERN EUROPE WERE ALSO UNWELCOME. BUT THEY WERE CLEARLY PREPARED TO

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BARGAIN, AND THERE WERE NO SIDE-EFFECTS INESCAPABLY BEYOND THEIR CAPACITY TO CONTROL.

4. THE AUGUST 1 RESULT, IN THE SOVIET VIEW, WAS A PACKAGE BALANCED ENOUGH IN THEIR FAVOR TO MERIT LEGITIMATE SATISFACTION, AND IT PROVIDED A GOOD POLITICAL BASIS FOR FURTHER MOVEMENT IN EAST-WEST RELATIONS IN EUROPE ALONG THE LINES THEY PREFERRED: THICKENING BILATERAL TIES, ESPECIALLY IN THE ECONOMIC AREA, VIA A SERIES OF SHINING SUMMITS, AND TURNING THE CORNER INTO PROGRESS IN ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS. ON THE MORROW OF CSCE, THEN, THE JUDGMENT IN MOSCOW THAT THE CONFERENCE HAD TURNED A PAGE IN CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN HISTORY WAS MUCH MORE THAN A PIOUS PREDICTION, EVEN IF IT WAS NOT YET-ENSHRINED IN THE HISTORY BOOKS.

5. IN RETROSPECT, WHAT DISTINGUISHED THIS VIEW FORM WESTERN EXPECTATIONS WAS THE ABSENCE OF A FOLLOW-UP IMPERATIVE, I.E., THE SOVIETS DID NOT EXPECT TO HAVE TO DO ANYTHING SPECIFIC AS A RESULT OF CSCE. THEY WERE PERFECTLY WILLING TO ENTERTAIN THE PROSPECT OF CONTINUED BARGAINING, AND BELIEVE THEY HAD UNDERTAKEN THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE FINAL ACT IN GOOD FAITH. BUT THEY WISHED TO RUN UP TO THEIR VALEDICTORY PARTY CONGRESS IN FEBRUARY ALONG THE TWIN TRACKS OF MUTUAL APPLAUSE IN SUMMITS WITH WESTERN LEADERS (CULMINATING IN WASHINGTON) AND AS MAY MULTILATERAL INTRA-COMMUNIST GATHERINGS-- A EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTY CONFERENCE, A CEMA SUMMIT, PERHAPS A WARSAW PACT MEETING--AS COULD BE ENGINEERED TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR PRIMACY IN THE "SOCIALIST CAMP." THERE WAS NOTHING IN THIS SCENARIO TO GENERATE CONCRETE STEPS TO IMPLEMENT CSCE PROVISIONS.

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6. AND, OF COURSE, IT HAS NOT WORKED OUT THE WAY THE SOVIETS WISHED IT TO WORK OUT. THEY HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO ENGINEER A SINGLE MULTILATERAL SUMMIT IN THE "SOCIALIST CAMP," AND IN EAST-WEST RELATIONS THEY HAVE BEEN FACED WITH DIFFICULTIES IN THE ARMS CONTROL FIELD AND A BARRAGE OF WESTERN DEMANDS, IN PRIVATE AND ESPECIALLY IN PUBLIC, FOR CSCE IMPLEMENTATION IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS AREA, AS A "TEST" OF THEIR INTENTIONS IN THE PAST AND IN THE FUTURE.

7. THE SOVIETS HAVE REACTED VERY SLOWLY, AND WITH CONSIDERABLE INDIGNATION. AS USUAL, THE INDIGNATION WAS PARTLY CONTRIVED: EVEN IN THEIR OWN PECULIAR TERMS, THEY NEVER EXPECTED THE "ENEMIES OF DETENTE" TO "LAY DOWN THEIR ARMS," AND THE AMPLE STALINIST RESIDUE IN SOVIET POLITICAL THINKING ENCOURAGES THE VIEW THAT THE "ENEMIES" WILL STEP UP THEIR ATTACKS JUST BEFORE THEY RE BURIED, JUST AS CLASS STRUGGLE USED TO SHARPEN WITH EACH VICTORY F SOVIET POWER. THEN TOO, THE SOVIETS WERE UNDOUBTEDLY PIQUED THAT CSCE BACKLASH IN THE WEST HAD THROWN THEIR OWN PREFERRED PATH TO THE CONGRESS OFF COURSE, AND DOUBLY PIQUED BECAUSE THEY HATE TO BE ON THE DEFENSIVE.

8. IN RETROSPECT, HOWEVER, IT APPEARS TO US THAT THE SINGLE FACTOR WHICH BEST EXPLAINS THE SLOW SOVIET

RESPONSE WAS PROBABLY BUREAUCRATIC INERTIA; IT WAS SIMPLY DIFFICULT FOR THE CUMBERSOME APPARATUS MAKING AND IMPLEMENTING POLICY IN MOSCOW TO COME TO GRIPS WITH A NEW DILEMMA, TO SHIFT GEARS TOWARD IMPLEMENTATION, AND TO COME FORWARD WITH A PROGRAM OF SPECIFIC STEPS DESIGNED TO DEFUSE WESTERN CRITICISM AND MAKE CSCE SHINE AGAIN AS A FOREIGN POLICY TRIMPH AT THE PARTY CONGRESS.

9. EVEN IN RETROSPECT IT IS HARD TO DATE THE STEPS IN THIS DIFFICULT PROCESS, BUT THE FOLLOWING SHOULD BE CONFIDENTIAL

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INCLUDED:

--IN THE PREPARATIONS FOR GISCARD'S VISIT WHICH BEGAN IN EARLY SEPTEMBER, THE FRENCH HERE FOUND THAT THE SOVIETS WERE UNABLE OR UNWILLING TO ENTERTAIN THE FRENCH PROPOSAL FOR A JOINT COMMISSION ON FAMILY REUNIFICATION, AND CONTINUED TO PROMOTE THEIR INITIAL CONCEPT FOR BILATERAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION AGREEMENTS (TO BE LABELLED CSCE IMPLEMENTATION) LONG AFTER THE ATMOSPHERE HAD SOURED.

-- DEFENSIVE MEDIA COMPLAINTS ABOUT WESTERN CSCE IMPLEMENTATION BEGAN EARLY (WITH SEDYKH'S CURIOUS CHARGE THAT THE EC WAS VIOLATING CSCE PRINCIPLES BY CONDITIONING AID TO PORTUGAL, ON AUGUST 8) BUT REALLY STARTED TO ROLL IN RESPONSE TO NATO MANEUVER NOTIFICATIONS AND OBSERVER INVITATIONS IN SEPTEMBER.

--THE GISCARD VISIT TO MOSCOW IN MID-OCTOBER STUMBLED ON CSCE IMPLEMENTATION, AND THE FRENCH CAME AWAY WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT THE SOVIETS WERE INTENT ON KEEPING CSCE AS A "MONUMENT," BUT WERE UNWILLING TO GIVE IT LIFE.

--HOWEVER, IN RECEIVING OUR CSCE DEMARCHE OCTOBER 14 KORNIYENKO NOTED THAT A BORAD-GAUGE REVIEW OF CSCE IMPLEMENTATION STEPS THE SOVIETS WOULD NEED TO TAKE WAS UNDERWAY.

--BY LATER OCTOBER OR EARLY NOVEMBER, WITH THE LINE OF CONTINUING IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE FIRST ANNOUNCED BY ARBATOV SEPTEMBER 3 (MOSCOW 75 12693) NAILED IN PLACE BY BREZHNEV'S TOAST TO GISCARD OCTOBER 15, THE MEDIA CAMPAIGN AGAINST ALLEGEDLY UNSATISFACTORY WESTERN CSCE IMPLEMENTATION MOVED INTO HIGH GEAR.

--BY DECEMBER, IT NOW APPEARS, THE "REVIEW" HAD PRODUCED THE IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM WHICH THE SOVIETS (AND THEIR ALLIES) ARE NOW IN THE PROCESS

OF PUTTING INTO EFFECT, AND WHICH THEY CAN BE EXPECTED
TO USE IN ORDER TO REGAIN THEIR LOST SPONSORSHIP OF THE
CSCE PROCESS BY THE TIME PARTICIPANTS RECONVENE IN BELGRADE
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NEXT YEAR.

10. IT IS IMPORTANT, WE THINK, TO DISTINGUISH THE TWO
FACES OF SOVIET STRATEGY ON CSCE IMPLEMENTATION. THE
DEFENSIVE FACE, WHICH IS THE MOST OFFENSIVE TO US, IS THE
STEADY DRUMBEAT OF NASTY CARPING ABOUT WESTERN CSCE
IMPLEMENTATION, INTERSPERSED WITH HONORABLE MENTION OF
VIRTUOUS SOVIET CONDUCT, WHICH FILLS THE SOVIET MEDIA.
IT ANTEDATED THE OFFENSIVE FACE--THE POSITIVE PROGRAM OF
ACTUAL STEPS TO IMPLEMENT HELSINKI, AND OTHER STEPS WHICH
WILL BE SO LABELLED--BY SOME MONTHS, BUT WHATEVER ITS
VALUE AS A HOLDING OPERATION AT THAT TIME, IT HAS BECOME
A PERMANENT FEATURE OF THE SOVIET APPROACH. ITS FORMS
CHANGE OVER TIME, BUT ALSO TEND TO ACCUMULATE LIKE
GEOLOGICAL LAYERS: WE WILL CONTINUE TO HEAR ABOUT THE
WESTERN BOOKS THE SOVIETS PUBLISH, THE WESTERN FILMS THEY
SHOW, AND THE CULTURAL COOPERATION ENDEAVORS THEY PARTICI-
PATE IN, EVEN WHEN THE HEADLINES, AS THEY DO CURRENTLY,
CONTAIN ATTACKS ON THE BRUSSELS ZIONIST CONFERENCE, TESTIMONIALS
BY SATISFIED SOVIET JEWS AND RIGHNING PROOFS THAT "REAL DEMOCRACY"
EXISTS ONLY UNDER "REAL SOCIALISM".

11. AT THE SAME TIME, IT IS THE OFFENSIVE FACE--THE PROGRAM
OF SPECIFIC STEPS--WHICH HAS OBVIOUSLY BEEN HARDEST FOR
THE SOVIETS, AND IS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT FOR THE FUTURE.
IT IS POSSIBLE TO DISTINGUISH THREE MAIN STRANDS IN THIS
PROGRAM. THE FIRST IS THE PROPOSAL FOR DISCUSSION OF THE
ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORTATION AND ENERGY WHICH BREZHNEV
UNVEILED AT WARSAW DECEMBER 9 AND WHICH THE SOVIETS
HAVE SINCE SUCCEEDED IN INSERTING INTO THEIR COMMUNI-
QUES WITH THE TURKS AND FINNS. THIS IS A "BIG CONCEPT"
OF THE KIND THE SOVIETS LIKE, AND AN INCARNATION OF
THEIR PREFERENCE FOR BASKET II COOPERATION OVER BASKET
III IMPLEMENTATION. THE SECOND IS THE SERIES OF SMALL
STEPS SPECIFICALLY TIED TO CSCE PROVISIONS, INTRODUCED
BOTH UNILATERALLY--AS WITH THE CAUCASUS MANEUVER NOTI-
FICATION JANUARY 4--AND AS BARGAINING PROPOSALS--AS WITH
THE SOVIET MESSAGE TO SCHMIDT DECEMBER 23 (75 MOSCOW
1825) AND THE CEMA "INITIATIVE" TO THE EC. THE THIRD,
FINALLY, ARE STEPS, BOTH FORMAL AND INFORMAL, WHICH ARE
NOT SPECIFICALLY RELATED TO CSCE PROVISIONS, BUT WHICH
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THE SOVIETS WILL ADVERTISE (PUBLICLY OR PRIVATELY) AS
"CSCE IMPLEMENTATION." INTO THIS CATEGORY FALL
THE SERIES OF DISCRETE DECISIONS TO LET INDIVIDUAL
APPLICANTS FOR EMIGRATION LEAVE THE USSR. HERE THE
SOVIETS' APPROACH WILL BE DISCRIMATING AND TAILORED TO
SPECIFIC FOREIGN POLICY NEEDS. FOR INSTANCE, WE HAVE
BEEN IMPRESSED WITH RECENT DECISIONS TO RELEASE PROMINENT
REFUSENIKS, BOTH JEWISH AND NON-JEWISH, AND UNIMPRESSED
WITH SOVIET PERFORMANCE ON FAMILY REUNIFICATION, BUT
SWISS AMBASSADOR FAESSLER REPORTED FEBRUARY 18 THAT THE
SOVIETS HAVE BEEN VERY FORTHCOMING IN THIS AREA
OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS, TO THE POINT WHERE ALL
THIRTY OF HIS OUTSTANDING CASES HAVE BEEN RESOLVED.
SUCH DECISIONS WILL SURELY BE LABELLED "FULFIL-
MENT" OF CSCE BY THE SOVIETS.

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12. NOT ALL OF SUCH STEPS ARE NECESSARILY DRIVEN MAINLY BY CSCE CONSIDERATIONS. FOR INSTANCE, GRANTING OF EXIT PERMISSION TO PROMINENT JEWISH REFUSENIKS LIKE ERNST MEIZVESTNIY AND ALEKSANDER LUNTS, AND THE CURRENT CAMPAIGN TO WHITEWASH "FREEDOM UNDER SOCIALISM", HAVE NO DOUBT BEEN KEYED TO THE CPSU CONGRESS, IN BOTH CASES, AND WEST EUROPEAN CP (ESPECIALLY PCF) CRITICISM, IN THE SECOND. THE SOVIETS REARELY HAVE ONLY ONE OBJECT IN MIND. BUT TAKEN TOGETHER, THEY CONSTITUTE A SERIOUS RESPONSE TO THE DILEMMA OF CSCE IMPLEMENTATION.

13. THIS RESPONSE, WHICH TOOK SO LONG TO WORK OUT, IS NOW EMBEDDED IN SOVIET POLICY. BREZHNEV'S NAME IS ATTACHED TO THE PROPOSAL FOR BASKET II-TYPE CONFERENCES, AND IN CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES THERE CAN BE NO GREATER EARNEST OF SOVIET SERIOUSNESS. THE EAST EUROPEAN FOREIGN MINISERS, IN THEIR MOSCOW MEETING DECEMBER 15-16, AND THE CC SECRETARIES FOR IDEOLOGY, IN THEIR WARSAW MEETING JANUARY 26,6, DISCUSSED CSCE IMPLEMENTATION; THE LATTER REACHED DECISIONS WHICH WERE SUBSEQUENTLY PASSED ON TO THE NATIONAL BUREAUCRACIES BY THE RESPECTIVE CENTRAL COMMITTEES. IN EARLY JANUARY, THE FINNISH FOREIGN MINISTER WAS TOLD THAT DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER KOVALEV WAS HARD AT WORK WITH A WHOLE TEAM ON THE TOPIC; BY FEBRARY 9, WHEN UK AMBASSADOR SMITH PRESENTED HIS CREDENTIALS TO PODGORNYY, SOVIET OFFICIALS WERE CONFIDENT ENOUGH OF THE RESULTS TO PREDICT CONTINUATION OF IMPLEMENTATION STEPS "BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER" THE CONGRESS.

14. THUS, IT SEEMS TO US THAT THE SOVIET PROBLEM WITH CSCE IMPLEMENTATION WAS ONE OF TIMING, PREFERENCE AND INERTIA, RATHER THAN ONE OF PRINCIPLE. SOVIET CSCE OBLIGATIONS, AS

WRITTEN IN THE ACT AND PERCEIVED BY THE SOVIETS, FALL WELL
WITHIN THE MARGIN OF SAFETY WHICH THE RICHER AND MORE
STABLE SOVIET SYSTEM OF TODAY CAN ACCOMMODATE. IMPLEMENTA-
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TION IS DIFFICULT, BUT THE DIFFICULTIES ARE NOT PROHIBITIVE.
THE SOVIETS DID NOT EXPECT TO HAVE TO DELIVER ON CSCE
BEFORE THEIR PARTY CONGRESS; AND HAVE FIELDDED WESTERN
PERSSURE WITH CHARACTERISTIC CAUTION AND CUMBERSOMENESS.
BUT SINCE THERE WAS NEVER ANY DOUBT IN OUR MINDS THAT
CSCE PROVIDE A MODEST BUT USEFUL INSTRUMENT FOR BRINGING
THEM A FEW MORE STEPS TOWARD NORMILTY, EVEN IN THE SENSI-
TIVE HUMAN RIGHTS AREA, IT MAY NOT BE AMISS TO POINT OUT
THAT THEY ARE CAPABLE OF MOVING CONSIDERABLY FURTHER IN THIS
DIRECTION--THEY HAVE SO FAR TO GO--AND MAY REGARD
IT IN THEIR OWN INTEREST TO DO SO. MAINTAINING SPONSOR-
SHIP OF CSCE WILL REMAIN AN OBJECT OF SOVIET FOREIGN
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